

# TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

## Meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee

Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.  
Central Library in Copley Square, Kirstein Business Library-Exchange  
700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

### MINUTES

A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Finance and Audit Committee was held on Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at the Central Library in the Kirstein Business Library-Exchange.

All members were present at the meeting including: Committee Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz and Committee members, John Hailer, Zamawa Arenas, and President David Leonard.

Also present were Boston Public Library staff including Ellen Donaghey, Chief Financial Officer, Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board, other BPL staff members, and members of the public.

The meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee (“Committee”) was called to order at 8:01 a.m. with a roll call and determined there was a quorum. The first matter of business was review and approval of Meeting Minutes from March 14, 2019 and April 19, 2019. With no edits or comments, the meeting minutes were approved.

Next, Mr. Matthew Hunt from CliftonLarsonAllen, was asked to review the Draft Financial Statements for FY19. Mr. Hunt said the auditing process was similar to previous years, the audit started in August and went smoothly. He thanked the Boston Public Library staff for their timeliness and responsiveness in responding to the auditors’ requests. He reported that it is CliftonLarsonAllen’s policy not to include the auditor’s opinion in the draft financial statement. It is expected that the rating will be “Unmodified,” which is the highest available.

In describing the Financial Highlights of the report, Mr. Hunt pointed to the General Fund noting it remained steady with a slight increase and the performance was good overall.

He then reported balances in each of the General Fund categories: Restricted Fund (programs and general trust holdings); Unassigned and Assigned Funds (state aid, and enterprise funds from special events which saw a 12% increase this year).

He also detailed revenues in the following categories: Intergovernmental Revenues; Special Events; Fees and Fines for Services; Gifts; and Investment Income which he noted had a significant increase due to improved markets and trends.

Mr. Hunt continued, pointing out the books expense included digital and printed books, and noted the General Fund expenses, have been as high as \$7 million in recent years but were \$5 million in FY19. These expenses included: Salaries and Benefits; Books and Related materials; Programs; Administrative costs such as Contractual Services and Utilities; and Equipment, Furniture and Repairs and Maintenance. The fluctuation may be due to some non-occurring items such as salaries. Ms. Donaghey explained some salaries and other expenses that were initially planned to be paid by the Fund for the Boston Public Library were moved to the City budget as the Library had a surplus in its city budget. This was done with the approval of the City’s Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Hunt concluded his report by adding that the vote of the financial statements is the only missing piece for approval of the statements.

The Chair called for a motion, it was duly made and seconded and,

**VOTED: “that the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the Boston Public Library’s Draft Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019.”**

The Trustees engaged in a discussion about the differences between patrons’ experiences today versus ten years ago and how we anticipate it to be in the future. Also, they had a few questions about the apparent decrease in collections spending, and more specifically the decrease in electronic purchases. Ms. Donaghey and Ms. Irmischer explained that, overall, spending goes up for collections each year, and that the figures reviewed in the financial report do not include funds expended from the City budget but rather just the Trustees funds. They suggested this be a matter of discussion at a full board meeting in the future.

Ms. Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections was asked to explain the contract for BELFOR Property Restoration. She explained that in preparation of the rare books renovation the Library had to move a number of collections and during this, discovered a small collection of older books that, while not part of a special collections, did need to be assessed and moved. These books have accumulated a large amount of dust and need to be cleaned, before being packed and stored until the renovation is complete. BELFOR has been used in the past and she is confident in their work. With no questions or comments, a motion was duly made and seconded, and

**VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston authorize a contract with BELFOR Property Restoration not to exceed fifty five thousand dollars (\$55,000) for the moving, cleaning, and storage of certain items in the Research Collection.”**

Next, Ms. Ellen Donaghey reviewed the gifts, grants, and donations. She highlighted the funds raised by the Library’s inaugural Boston Marathon team, which totaled almost \$140,000 and will be used to support afterschool programming. She also noted the City-Wide Friends’ donation had been deposited shortly after the start of FY20 so is not reflected in this gift report. She also noted a significant increase from the Associates of the Boston Public Library. There were no questions or comments.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for new business and Public Comment for which there was none.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R. Carver  
Clerk of the Board